

**REMARKS**

In the Office Action, claims 1-16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,324,311 to Acken in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,769,671 to Lim.

In the Office Action, claims 17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Acken in view of Lim and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,895,276 to Kast et al.

In response thereto, claims 1, 10, and 16 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-19 are now pending. Following is a discussion of the patentability of each of the pending claims.

**Independent Claim 1**

Claim 1 recites an electrical contact assembly for an implantable medical device. The electrical contact assembly comprises a garter spring (74) having an inner diameter and a garter spring retainer (50). The garter spring retainer comprises a tubular wall (80) receiving the garter spring. The tubular wall has an inner cylindrical surface (88) defining a retainer opening adapter to receive an electrical contact. The tubular wall further includes an outer cylindrical surface (86) having an outer diameter larger than the inner diameter of the garter spring in the relaxed state of the spring so that the garter spring is thereby tensionally preloaded when the garter spring is in place on the outer cylindrical surface of the tubular wall. The tubular wall further has at least one aperture (92, 94, and 96) through which a corresponding section of the garter spring projects inwardly into the retainer opening for engaging the electrical contact received therein.

The Acken reference discloses a connector assembly for an implantable medical device. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 1, the connector assembly includes a receptacle (10) having a cylindrical side wall (17). The receptacle has a ring terminal (24) in the form of ring with a T-shaped cross-sectional configuration. The ring terminal has an annular groove (26) within which is retained a garter spring (28).

The Acken reference does not disclose or suggest a garter spring retainer comprising a tubular wall having an outer cylindrical surface with an outer diameter larger than an inner diameter of a garter spring so that the garter spring is thereby tensionally preloaded when the garter spring is placed on the outer cylindrical surface of the tubular wall. In the Acken device, the garter spring is placed within an inner cylindrical surface of the tubular wall so that the garter spring is either not preloaded or compressively preloaded.

The Lim reference discloses a connector having a housing. The housing has a cylindrical opening in which is located a contact spring for engaging a lead. The opening in the housing has an interrupted inner surface as defined by concentric first and second axially spaced cylindrical inner surfaces to define an annular radially directed gap therebetween. The contact spring is located within the gap to provide contact between the inserted lead and the housing.

The Lim reference does not disclose or suggest a garter spring retainer comprising a tubular wall having an outer cylindrical surface with an outer diameter larger than an inner diameter of a garter spring so that the garter spring is thereby tensionally preloaded when the garter spring is placed on the outer cylindrical surface of the tubular wall. In the Lim device, the contact spring is placed within an inner cylindrical surface of the housing so that the contact spring is compressively preloaded.

The Kast et al. reference discloses a connector assembly having a garter spring fitted into a channel bore. The garter spring is retained or trapped in the channel and introduces slightly into a connector element bore.

The Kast et al. reference does not disclose or suggest a garter spring retainer comprising a tubular wall having an outer cylindrical surface with an outer diameter larger than an inner diameter of a garter spring so that the garter spring is thereby tensionally preloaded when the garter spring is placed on the outer cylindrical surface of the tubular wall. In the Kast et al. device, the garter spring is retained within an inner cylindrical surface of the channel such that the garter spring is placed within an inner cylindrical surface of the housing so that the contact spring is compressively preloaded.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims 2-9

Claims 2-9 depend from claim 1 and are similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 10

For at least the same reasons discussed above with regards to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims 11-15

Claims 11-15 depend from claim 10 and are similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 16

For at least the same reasons discussed above with regards to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claim 16 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claim 17

Claim 17 depends from claim 16 and is similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 18

For at least the same reasons discussed above with regards to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claim 18 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claim 19

Claim 19 depends from claim 18 and is similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 19 is in condition for allowance.

**CONCLUSION**

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and an early notice of allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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